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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry

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23 October 1985

The Honorable Dave Durenberger
Chairman, Select Committee on Intelligence
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Dave,

There seems to be a misunderstanding as to how we should go about developing a national foreign intelligence strategy and a plan to implement such a strategy.

I hear from up on the Hill that I have approved the draft Guidelines which have been circulated. That is not correct. I told Bernie McMahon, and reaffirmed to you in a briefing last week, that I thought it was counterproductive to spend time writing Guidelines in the abstract and that instead I would go ahead and have a strategy paper--based on our interaction on this thus far--developed by the managers of the Intelligence Community. This process is already underway, and I expect to have a first draft in November.

If we undertake to develop a plan pursuant to Guidelines developed in a vacuum rather than in the context of actually addressing the challenges and issues themselves in their detail, it is likely to be a long, drawn out and unproductive undertaking. Some elements in the draft Guidelines we have seen would require an amount of precision and effort far beyond their value.

I believe the course on which I told you I would, and have now embarked, is a more practical and useful method of achieving our joint purpose. Therefore, I hope that, at this stage, no language referring to specific Guidelines will be put into the Authorization Bill. I'm afraid that would restrict and divert both of us from what can best and most usefully be accomplished in this process and delay us in what we have already started to do.

The practical and cooperative way to address this would be for us to get our proposed plan to you, review it together and then see how we can meet any shortfalls you may find in what we do. If you feel that some reference to this effort needs to be included in the Authorization Bill, I would suggest it be confined to a statement along the following lines:

- The Director of Central Intelligence, in cooperation with (or at the request of) the Committees, is developing a national intelligence strategy. As a result of this collaboration, the Director of Central Intelligence is preparing an implementing plan which will include both the Intelligence Community's assessment of long-range intelligence needs, capabilities and shortfalls, and its proposals for dealing with these shortfalls.

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This would be the operative provision. The Committees or the conferees--either before or after such a statement--can spell out general objectives and goals in the overall strategy and take note of factors which will shape the development of any plan such as the information explosion, the increasing difficulty and complexity of collection, the competition for resources, etc.

If we proceed quietly and expeditiously, as we have already begun, I believe we will get to the heart of the matter and get something valuable done in fairly short order.

Yours,


William J. Casey

cc: The Honorable Lee H. Hamilton
Chairman, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

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